

**State Board of Education  
Summary of Transformation Discussion with Vermont Principals  
November 20, 2007**

Members of the State Board of Education met in the afternoon of Tuesday, November 20<sup>th</sup> with principals from around the state to begin a public engagement process regarding the future of education in Vermont. This discussion was kicked off by the release of *The Future of Education in Vermont*, an education transformation discussion document recently adopted by the State Board of Education. Facilitated by Department of Education staff members, principals were split into four groups to respond to three questions:

- As you envision a transformed learning environment for the students of Vermont what current practices should be included in a transformed education system that would best serve the needs of all students?
- As you envision a transformed learning environment for the students of Vermont what new practices should be included?
- What questions does the document, A Step toward the Transformation of Education in Vermont, raise for you as an educator? A principal?

Principals mentioned several *current* practices they felt should be included in a transformed education system.

- regional career technical education centers
- hands-on, applied learning
- broad mission of school
- current curricular framework
- integrated, connected curriculum
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills embedded in GEs
- small class sizes
- caring and supportive relationships
- schools as centers of communities
- meeting individual students' needs
- advisory system for students
- student-led mentoring
- Responsive Classroom initiative
- Multiple Pathways program
- Teaching All Secondary Students program

Principals also discussed what *new* practices they would like to see in a transformed education system.

- expanded course opportunities at the high school level, particularly language courses
- online courses; “virtual high schools”
- integration of technology
- 21<sup>st</sup> century skills
- laptops for students
- individualized learning plans for students of all ages

- interdisciplinary learning; connected curriculum
- dual enrollment (high school/college)
- global perspective on the world
- alternative programs
- student-centered learning environment
- career awareness as early as 9<sup>th</sup> grade; job shadowing for high school students; apprenticeships
- community partnerships; business/school partnerships
- coordinators who assist students with internships, community placements, etc.
- flexibility in credit options for high school graduation (i.e. credit for work-based placement, internships)
- better relationship with higher education community
- higher education willing to accept competency-based credits; higher education more flexible
- K-16 continuum
- common planning time for educators; team teaching
- professional development for teachers in:
  - collaboration
  - use of assessment data
  - social/emotional skills, integration and utilization of technology

Finally, principals shared their reactions to the document, A Step toward the Transformation of Education in Vermont, and discussed questions it raised for them as school leaders.

- How do we meet the needs of all students/ learners?
- How do we blend individualization and flexibility into the school system?
- How do we bring relevancy into the classroom?
- How do we look at the bigger picture given that we're mired in everyday functions of the classroom?
- What is essential and how do we fund it?
- How do we make the best use of the resources we have?
- How can we even out the inequities in technology across the state?
- What might leadership look like in schools post-Transformation?
- How can we create community partnerships?
- How can we re-structure the "credit" system for graduation?
- Where is the money for technology hard/software and professional development?
- How can we ensure quality and equity in teacher preparation programs? (research base)

Much of the time on the next few State Board monthly meeting agendas will be dedicated to similar conversations between State Board members and representatives of various constituent groups. Future meetings will include superintendents, school board members, legislators and other political leaders, representatives of the business community and other constituent groups. In past meetings, the State Board has heard from students and parents. The public is encouraged to participate in the process—the desired state document can be viewed and comments can be made at [http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future\\_of\\_education.html](http://education.vermont.gov/new/html/dept/future_of_education.html).